

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter said that almost \$366,000 in federal stimulus funds will go towards the planning of clean water projects for Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes.

“The freshwater from the Great Lakes and the Finger Lakes is one of our greatest local resources,” said Slaughter. “I’m pleased that federal stimulus dollars are going towards grants used to help us keep local waters clean.”

The Great Lakes Commission will receive \$254,695 for the collection of phosphorus data in tributaries feeding into Lake Ontario. Phosphorus, when in balance, is an important nutrient in Lake Ontario’s ecosystem and is used by microscopic phytoplankton to grow at the bottom of the lake’s food chain. However, elevated levels of phosphorus in Lake Ontario creates an overabundance of algae growth that threatens the lake’s ecosystem and contributes to the closure of local beaches, like Ontario Beach Park.

Also awarded funding was the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council. The organization will receive \$97,369 to assess and inventory storm water needs as they determine the potential for green infrastructure projects. They’ll also receive \$13,887 to provide online information of impervious areas of the nine-county region for use in long-term storm water planning.

The grants were handed out through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as part of a program designed to provide water quality assessments and planning assistance to local communities in the federal Clean Water Act.

Funds for the clean water planning projects came from the federal stimulus legislation, which was approved by Congress on February 13 and which Slaughter supported and helped enact into law. To date, projects in the 28th Congressional district are set to receive more than \$260 million in federal stimulus money going towards projects that extend credit to small businesses, increase access to education and support the arts in a time of decreasing private contributions.